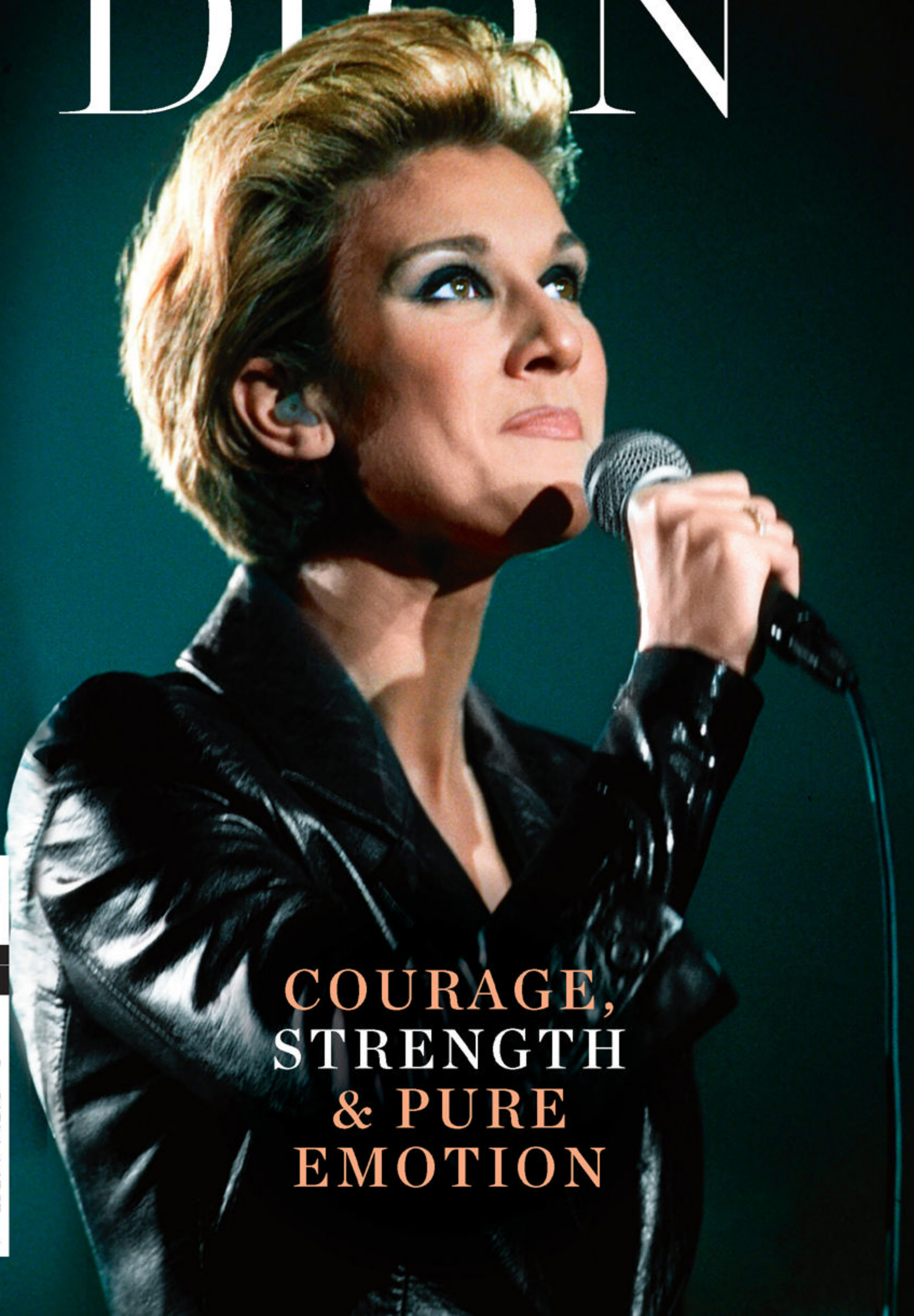
The LEGENDARY CELINE DION



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The LEGENDARY CELINE DION

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LEGENDARY
David Foster once said Dion (here in 2012) "is the person every singer should study."

Why We LOVE Celine DION

The diva with a voice—and heart—of gold

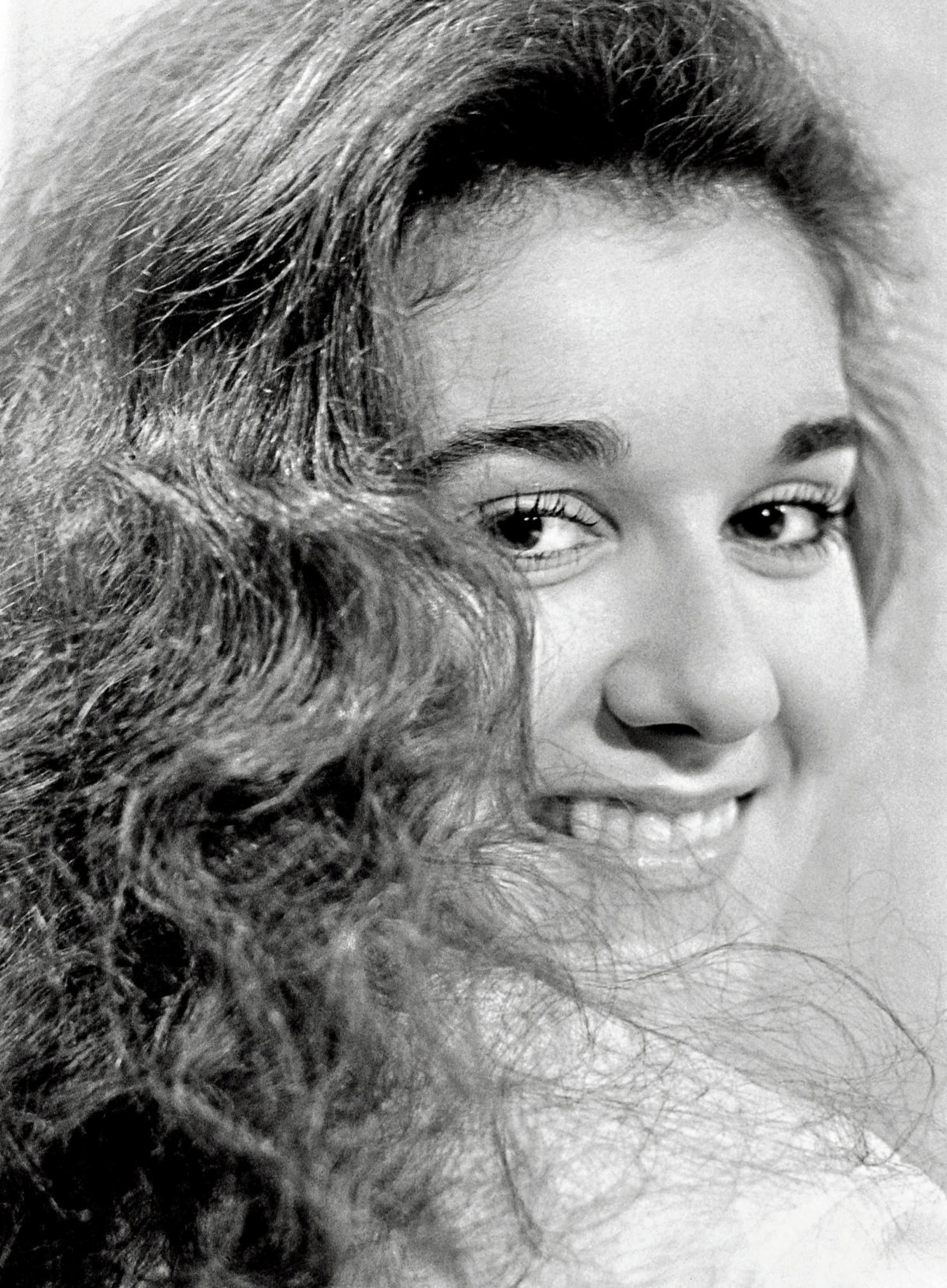
Celine Dion exists in a long line of divas, but there is something truly otherworldly about the way she delivers a seemingly endless cascade of emotion every time she steps to a microphone. She has been capturing hearts and breaking records since she was a teen, first striking gold as a wunderkind in her native Canada and then rocketing to global superstardom with hits such as "The Power of Love," "All By Myself," and "My Heart Will Go On," the musical centerpiece of *Titanic*, one of the most successful films of all time.

Indeed, Dion has been such a consistent force in pop music for so long and was declared a legend so early that it has become easy to take her for granted. But her career has not been the straight up arrow that most people perceive, and she has known plenty of tragedy to go along with her run of triumphs.

On Dec. 8, 2022, Dion announced in an emotional Instagram video that she had been diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder known as stiff-person syndrome. The condition affects the central nervous system, targeting the brain and spinal cord specifically, and can cause symptoms that include hyper-rigidity, debilitating pain, chronic anxiety and violent muscle spasms. Because of this development, Dion was forced to reschedule her spring 2023 shows to 2024, and her summer 2023 shows—previously scheduled between May 31 and July 17—were effectively canceled.

As is her nature, however, Dion is facing this difficult test with courage and grace. She went on to say in her social media post that she's working with a sports medicine therapist to build back her strength and ability to perform. "For me to reach you again, I have no choice but to concentrate on my health at this moment," she said, admitting that it's been a struggle. "And I have hope that I'm on the road to recovery."

Her fans do too. After all, there's only one Celine Dion, and this is her story.



CHAPTER 1

The youngest child in a large musical family, Celine was a prodigy

A STAR Is BORN

Portrait of a 16-year-old Celine Dion in November 1984, before she opened for French entertainer Patrick Sébastien at the Olympia in Paris.

CHAPTER 1

YOUNG TALENT
Celine Dion (left, top) and her parents, Thérèse and Adhémar, celebrate the singer's 1984 album, *Mélanie.* Dion (left, bottom) shows off her '80s style in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, in 1987.

PRETTY IN PINK
Dion performs on the popular French television show *Champs-Elysées,* hosted by Michel Drucker, on Jan. 19, 1985. Her first appearance on the show had been two years prior, in 1983.

CELINE DION
Mélanie

THE TOWN OF CHARLEMAGNE SITS PERCHED ON THE

banks of the Rivière des Prairies, only a handful of miles from Montreal. Though it is named after the first Holy Roman Emperor, its eternal claim to fame is as the birthplace of Celine Marie Claudette Dion, who was welcomed by her parents, Adhémar and Thérèse Dion, on March 30, 1968. Celine was the last of Adhémar and Thérèse's 14 children (her eldest sister, Denise, was born in August 1946, making her Celine's senior by nearly 22 years). Adhémar was a butcher by trade, but the Dions were deeply entrenched in music: He and his wife also owned a local cabaret bar called Le Vieux Baril ("The Old Barrel") where their children would often sing on weekends. Celine's earliest memories are of watching her siblings on stage. "I'd sleep on chairs in restaurants and bars while they sang," she said.

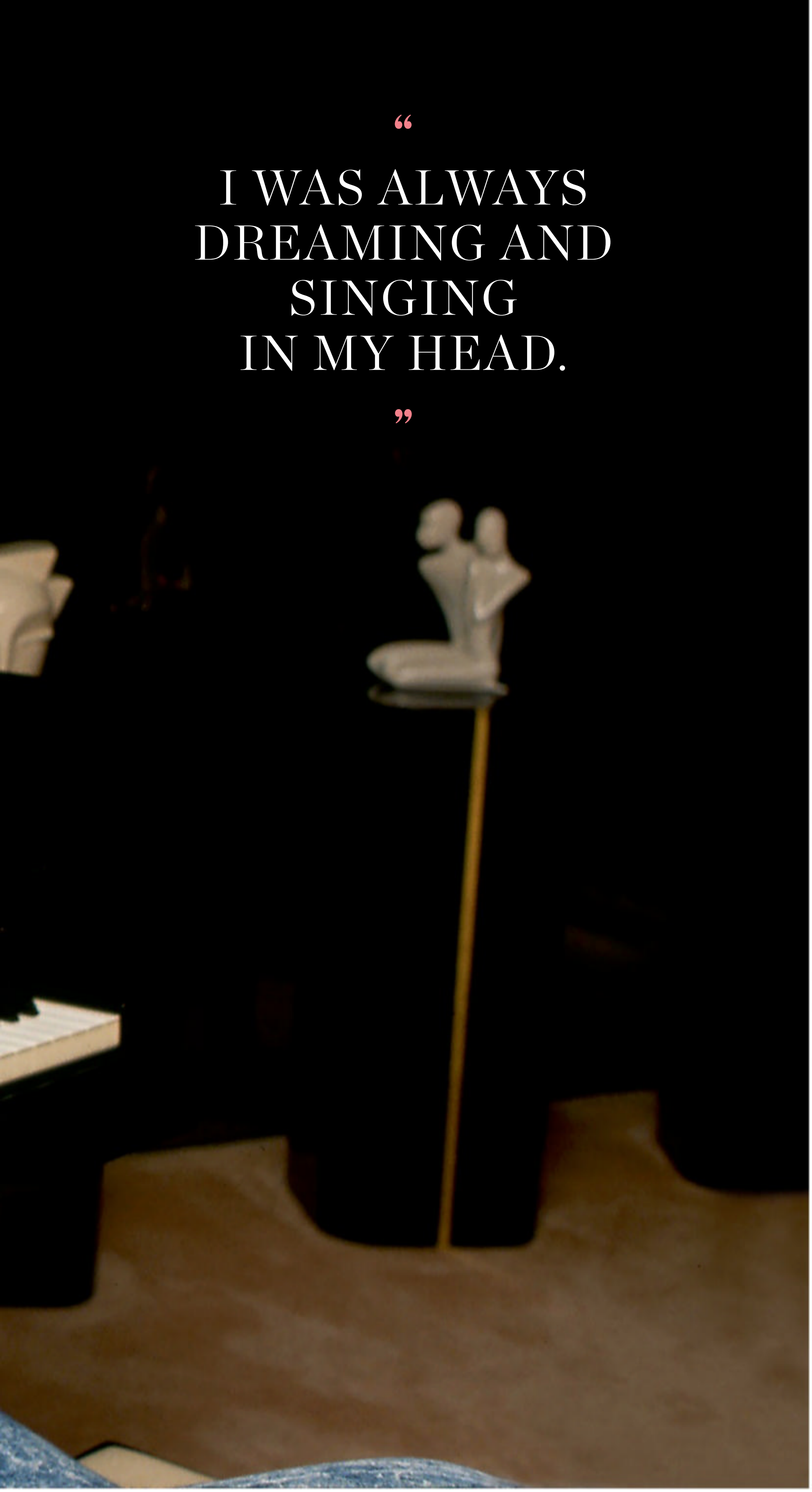
Before long, Celine got in the game herself, duetting with her brothers and sisters and taking solos at family gatherings. Even at a young age, she was fully obsessed with performing. "My mom would say, 'Céline, darling, you didn't go to school yesterday; you have to go today,'" she said. "I'd say, 'Mom, I'm too tired.' When I did go to school I was always dreaming and singing in my head." When she was 12, she composed and recorded a song called "Ce n'était

> “WHILE I WAS SINGING HE STARTED TO CRY.”

qu’un rêve” (“It Was Only a Dream”) alongside her older brother Jacques. Their brother Michel then sent a recording of the song to local music mogul René Angélil. The manager of French-Canadian stars such as Réne Simard and Ginette Reno, Angélil also had some notoriety as a former pop singer himself. He immediately recognized Dion’s talent and invited her to a formal audition. “While I was singing he started to cry,” Dion said. “I knew then I had done a good job.” Angélil took on the young Dion and mortgaged his house in order to finance what would become her debut album.

That release, *La voix du bon Dieu (The Good Lord’s Voice)*, arrived in late 1981 and featured the 13-year-old Dion on the front cover. It was only available in Quebec but was something of a sensation that scored her two hits on local radio, which favored French-language songs by regional artists. Combined with the Christmas album she released a month later (*Céline Dion Chante Noël*), Dion sold more than 100,000 copies of her earliest music. Angélil began taking Dion all over her home province and eventually to the rest of Canada where she built buzz as a prodigy with a jaw-dropping voice who had a way with covers and a healthy catalog of originals. In 1982, after Dion officially dropped out of school at age 14, she traveled to Tokyo for the World Popular Song Festival, an international

WITH EMOTION
Dion hits the recording studio in 1988, six years after officially dropping out of school at the age of 14 in Canada to pursue her passion for music full time.



> “I WAS ALWAYS DREAMING AND SINGING IN MY HEAD.”

WINNING STREAK
Throughout the ’80s, Dion continued to release music to great critical and commercial acclaim in Canada and collected a handful of local awards.

CRIES OF JOY
Dion (below, second from right) wipes away tears as she's congratulated onstage after winning the Eurovision Song Contest in Dublin, Ireland, in 1988.

GOLDEN GIRL
Representing Switzerland, Dion (right) sings "Ne partez pas sans moi" ("Don't Leave Without Me") while competing in the 1988 Eurovision Song Contest.

music competition. She performed a new song called "Tellement j'ai d'amour pour toi" ("I Have So Much Love For You")—the song that became the first single from her next album—to an audience of millions and took home the prize for Most Outstanding Song and Best Performer (though she was denied the Grand Prix top prize, which was taken home by American singer Anne Bertucci and her song "Where Did We Go Wrong").

Dion continued to release music to great critical and commercial acclaim in Canada, collected a handful of local awards, and even had a single in France. In 1988, she traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest (representing Switzerland) and ended up winning the grand prize with "Ne partez pas sans moi" ("Don't Leave Without Me"). But despite all the European acclaim, she knew that true pop success required scoring big in the United States. To do that, the French-Canadian singer needed to develop a better grasp on English. And once her lessons were complete, she presented her first-ever English-language album, one that opened a whole new chapter of her life and career.

CHAPTER 2

Celine's natural gift remains the power behind her success

The VOICE

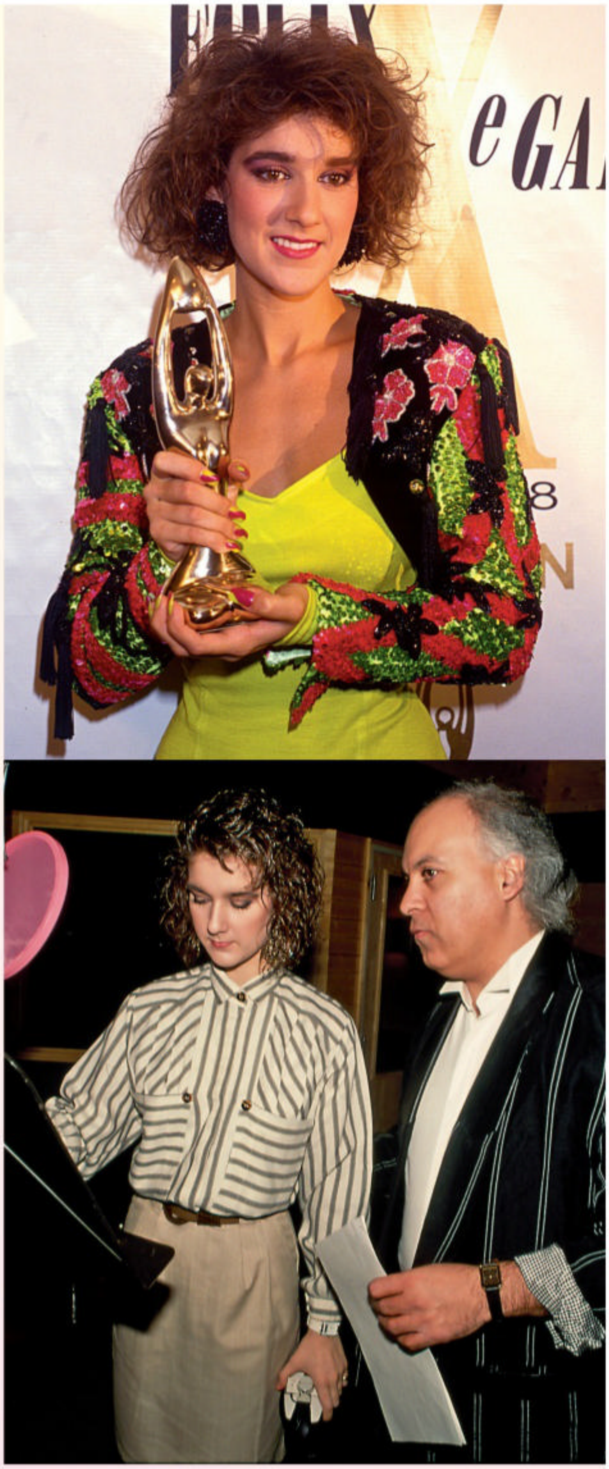
Celine Dion doesn't hold back as she performs in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, in June 1991. Her incredible tone, breath control, power and passion were clear even when she was a teenager.

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE
A 20-year-old Dion is pictured in Dublin, Ireland, on April 29, 1988, a day before winning the Eurovision Song Contest in a nail-biter of a competition.

IN MOST CIRCUMSTANCES IT TAKES ALOT TO BECOME A proper superstar. The bulk of the greats not only possess musical prowess but also songwriting skill, deft fashion sense, sex appeal and a personality with some depth in order to achieve growth and longevity. To stand above, it helps to be superior in something—and in the case of Celine Dion, that special something is her voice.

Dion sang from an early age, and her incredible tone, breath control, power and passion were clear even as a teenager. In her youth, she was able to tap into a shocking well of maturity when she sang, despite the fact that her life was not extraordinarily unusual. “I never heard so much feeling and experience in such a young voice,” said songwriter Eddy Marnay, the Algeria-born French songwriter who collaborated with Edith Piaf and Charlie Chaplin and who penned the bulk of the best tunes on Dion’s pre-fame releases. “In her voice, we heard the true image of her soul.”

It started with her incredible range. Most female singers are able to either master the upper register



IN LIVING COLOR
Dion (left, top), wearing a bold lime green ensemble, holds up her Felix Award in 1988. The singer (left, bottom) with manager René Angélil in the studio in 1988.

INTO THE BLUE
Dion dazzles in sparkly blue sequins (right) in 1988. Dion's incredible range enables her to deliver soft, romantic vocals alongside powerful high notes.

> "IN HER VOICE, WE HEARD THE TRUE IMAGE OF HER SOUL."

(making them sopranos) or harness the strength of their middle range (often referred to as "belters"). Dion has always been comfortable in both voices, and she is simultaneously able to deliver power and romance no matter what part of her voice she is using. Consider "The Power of Love," one of Dion's signature hits that appeared on her 1993 album, *The Colour of My Love*. The opening verse dances all around Dion's range, and she delivers the lines with a spryness that never takes away from her passion or authority. By the time she gets to the chorus, she's hitting the climax of the song on the word "lady" with a little added gusto and grit, and then in the final chorus she jumps way up to hit an insane sustained final note on "love," which seamlessly drifts in and out of her upper register. It's a marvel of vocal prowess and control.

What's more remarkable is that for most of her youth, Dion was self-taught. She listened to her parents' old records and took cues from her siblings and the other performers she saw come through her parents' cabaret club, and she would constantly

RETURNING CHAMP
A year after winning the Eurovision Song Contest, Dion (above) went back in 1989 to open the show with a performance of "Where Does My Heart Beat Now."

RIGHT AS RAIN
The singer stays dry under an umbrella while visiting Zurich, Switzerland, in 1988. Dion represented the country in the Eurovision Song Contest that same year.

self-evaluate by recording herself singing and listening back to the tapes. She wasn't able to express what she was looking for, but she knew what sounded good and what didn't.

It wasn't until she ran into some ill vocal health that she started taking formal voice lessons and employed a vocal coach. While performing on stage in 1989, Dion lost her voice. She consulted with specialists who gave her an ultimatum: She could either opt to undergo surgery that could potentially leave permanent damage to her vocal cords, or she would have to go on total vocal rest and remain silent for several weeks. Not wanting to risk her future, Dion opted to go completely quiet, without so much as whispering, while her voice regained its strength.

FOR THE RECORD
Dion (below, with manager Angélil) celebrates 10 years in the music business in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on June 19, 1991.

ALL BY HERSELF
For the first part of her career, Dion (right) was self-taught. It wasn't until the late '80s that she started working with a vocal coach.

It was in that moment that she decided to get proper training and work with a coach, something that she continues to do to this day. That formal training has allowed her to continue to deliver the same level of tone and power she had when she first broke through to the English-speaking market, and none of her most iconic songs, including "Because You Loved Me," "All By Myself" or "The Power of Love" have lost their thrilling impact whenever she hits the high notes live in concert.

> "I NEVER HEARD SO MUCH FEELING..."

CELINE DION

CHAPTER 3

Dion’s relationship with her manager blossomed into romance and bloomed into family

CELINE and RENE

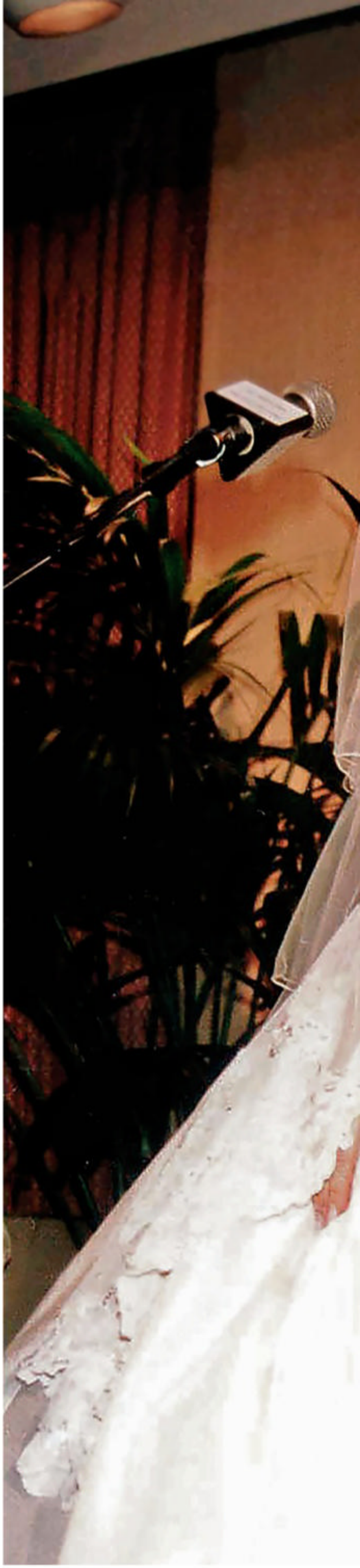
Celine Dion and her longtime manager, René Angélil, in Los Angeles in March 1990. Angélil’s steady hand led Dion to a successful career in Quebec and her first international exposure at Eurovision.

ON THE STRENGTH OF HER OBVIOUS TALENT

and drive to excel, Celine Dion likely would have become a singing superstar no matter what. But without the support and inspiration of manager René Angélil, her life might not have been as sweet.

Angélil was born in Montreal in 1942 and grew up loving pop music. He began his career when he was 19 years old as the singer for a group called Les Baronets, which he formed alongside two childhood friends. Throughout the 1960s, the group scored a handful of minor hits in Canada's French-language market, largely via translations of tracks that had already become big in the English-speaking world, including Francophone versions of several Beatles tunes. Les Baronets called it quits in 1972, at which point Angélil teamed up with longtime friend Guy Cloutier to start a music management company.

By the time the 1980s rolled around and his initial run of success as a manager was starting to diminish, Angélil was considering hanging it up and going to law school in order to redirect his career. Then he heard Dion's demo tape, and he knew her voice



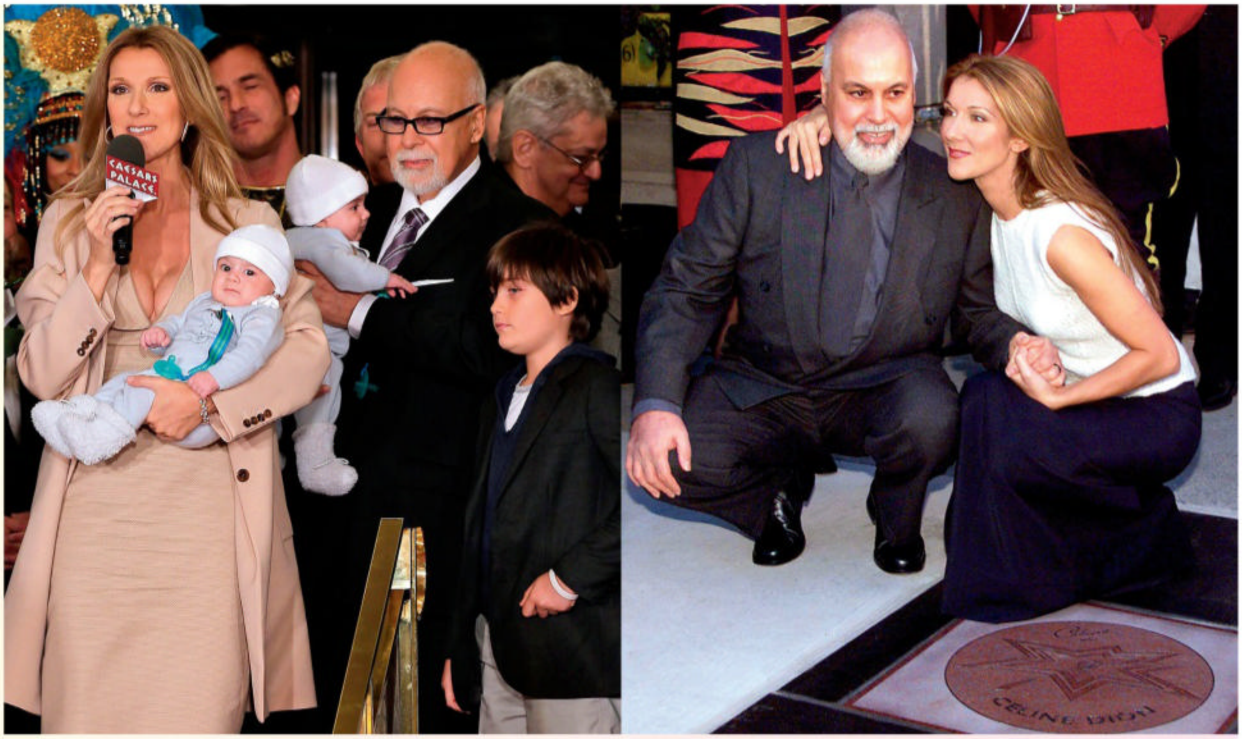
TYING THE KNOT
On Dec. 17, 1994, Dion and Angélil married at the Notre-Dame Basilica in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Their nuptials were broadcast live on TV.

would be game-changing. “I listened to it right away, and I couldn’t believe it,” Angélil said of that first rough recording. “She was very shy, but her eyes were incredible.”

Angélil’s steady hand led Dion to her initial run of French-language hits in Quebec and her first international exposure at Eurovision. Having conquered the Francophone world, together they set their sights on the English-speaking pop universe, and Angélil arranged for Dion to take a three-month crash course to learn English. He continued to guide her through her rise up the worldwide pop ranks, and along the way their relationship began to shift. When she was 19, Dion became romantically involved with Angélil. “The hugs just became better, and his kisses moved across my cheek,” Dion joked of the blossoming relationship with the man who would become her husband.

The pair married in December 1994 in a lavish ceremony at the Notre-Dame Basilica in Montreal.

> “I LISTENED TO IT RIGHT AWAY, AND I COULDN’T BELIEVE IT.”



FAMILY AFFAIR Below, left: Dion and Angélil at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas with sons (from left) Nelson, Eddy and René-Charles in 2011. Dion (below, right) receives a plaque on Canada’s Walk of Fame in 1999.

LOVE IN BLOOM Angélil (near right) and Dion share a moment in Cannes, France, in 1996. The pair’s relationship began to shift into a romantic one when Dion was 19. “The hugs just became better,” she’s said.

ON HIATUS
Dion and Angélil pose for a photo after a press conference in Montreal on Sept. 8, 1999. The singer took two years off from late 1999 to early 2002 to raise a family.

Dion was already such a supernova that the couple's nuptials were broadcast live on Canadian television. Angélil had been married twice, including to another Québecoise pop singer named Anne Renée with whom he had two children, so Dion inherited a pair of mostly-grown stepkids at age 26.

As she became more of a phenomenon, Angélil slowly began to cede more control of Dion's career, particularly as his health started to decline. He was diagnosed with throat cancer in 1998 and underwent years of treatment before finally beating the disease into remission in 2000. It was around that same time that Dion, at the height of her popularity in the wake of the stunning success of "My Heart Will Go On," took a two-year hiatus from her career to take care of René and to start a family of her own with him. "It was a must," she said. "I had to take those two years."

Dion and Angélil welcomed their son René-Charles Angélil in January 2001, and the couple had twins, Nelson and Eddy, in October 2010. "It changed my life completely—as a human being, as a singer," she said of motherhood. "I think children are holding the secret of life. When you're around children, they're everything. I know that this is the most difficult job I will ever have to do in my whole life, but definitely the most rewarding."

HEARTS AFLAME
The couple renew their wedding vows in an Eastern Orthodox ceremony at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas on Jan. 5, 2000, five years after they first married on Dec. 17, 1994.

LOOK OF LOVE
Dion and Angélil arrive for the taping of the television show *Vivement dimanche* at Studio Gabriel in Paris on Nov. 13, 2013.

CHAPTER 4

By the dawn of the 1990s, tastes were changing and Celine Dion was poised to take advantage

Rarified AIR

Celine Dion performing onstage in London on Nov. 18, 1995. The following year, her album *Falling Into You* sold more than 12 million copies in the U.S. alone, giving Dion her first-ever No. 1 album.

POWER SUIT
Dion (left) performs at London's Wembley Arena on Nov. 16, 1996, during her Falling Into You tour. The album yielded hits including "All By Myself" and "Because You Loved Me."

AWARDS SEASON
The singer (right, top) won a Grammy for her vocals alongside Peabo Bryson (right, bottom, with Dion at the American Music Awards in 1992) on the pop version of "Beauty and the Beast."

WITH A HANDFUL OF CANADIAN HITS

at her back and a new knowledge of English at the ready, Celine Dion stormed into a new decade. Her first English-language album and first proper American release came in April 1990. Titled *Unison*, it showed off Dion's incredible vocal range on a handful of well-curated songs and was largely produced by award-winning soft rock legend, and fellow Canadian, David Foster. The single "Where Does My Heart Beat Now," which Dion first performed at Eurovision in 1989, made it all the way to No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100, giving Dion her first bona fide hit outside of French-speaking Canada. *Unison* ended up going platinum. Now Dion had a firm foothold in America, one she would use to climb even higher.

Dion's voice was always going to help her claim professional victories, but her absolute supernova success was aided by a handful of outside factors. She rode the rise of the adult contemporary radio format, which had become much larger and more impactful on overall music sales starting in the late 1980s thanks to the crossover success of soft rockers like Phil Collins and Michael Bolton. The early '90s also saw a shift in audience tastes toward big, authentic

10,000,000
NORTH AMERICA
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

GLOBAL TAKEOVER
Dion kicked off her D'eux tour in Quebec City, Canada, on Sept. 25, 1995, playing five concerts there before heading to Europe for the remaining dates.

> "PURE SINGING TALENT ... GAINED A NEW VALUE AND APPRECIATION."

voices—partially because of the ascent of divas such as Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey—but also as a reaction to the fallout over pop duo Milli Vanilli, who were outed as lip-syncers and forced to give back their Grammy for Best New Artist at the end of 1990. Pure singing talent was always appealing to listeners, but it gained a new value and appreciation when held against music that was suddenly easy to dismiss as "fake."

But, even with her special voice, Dion would not have become such a massive phenomenon without an arsenal of well-chosen, catchy songs. She followed up *Unison* with an incredible coup, as she was drafted to record alongside Peabo Bryson on the pop version of "Beauty and the Beast," the song originally sung by Angela Lansbury in the Disney animated movie of the same name. Not only did the song give Dion her second U.S. top 10 hit, it also put her into heavy rotation on cable television's VH1 and opened the door to performance slots on both the Grammys and the Oscars (where the tune won Best Original Song for writers Alan Menken and Howard Ashman).

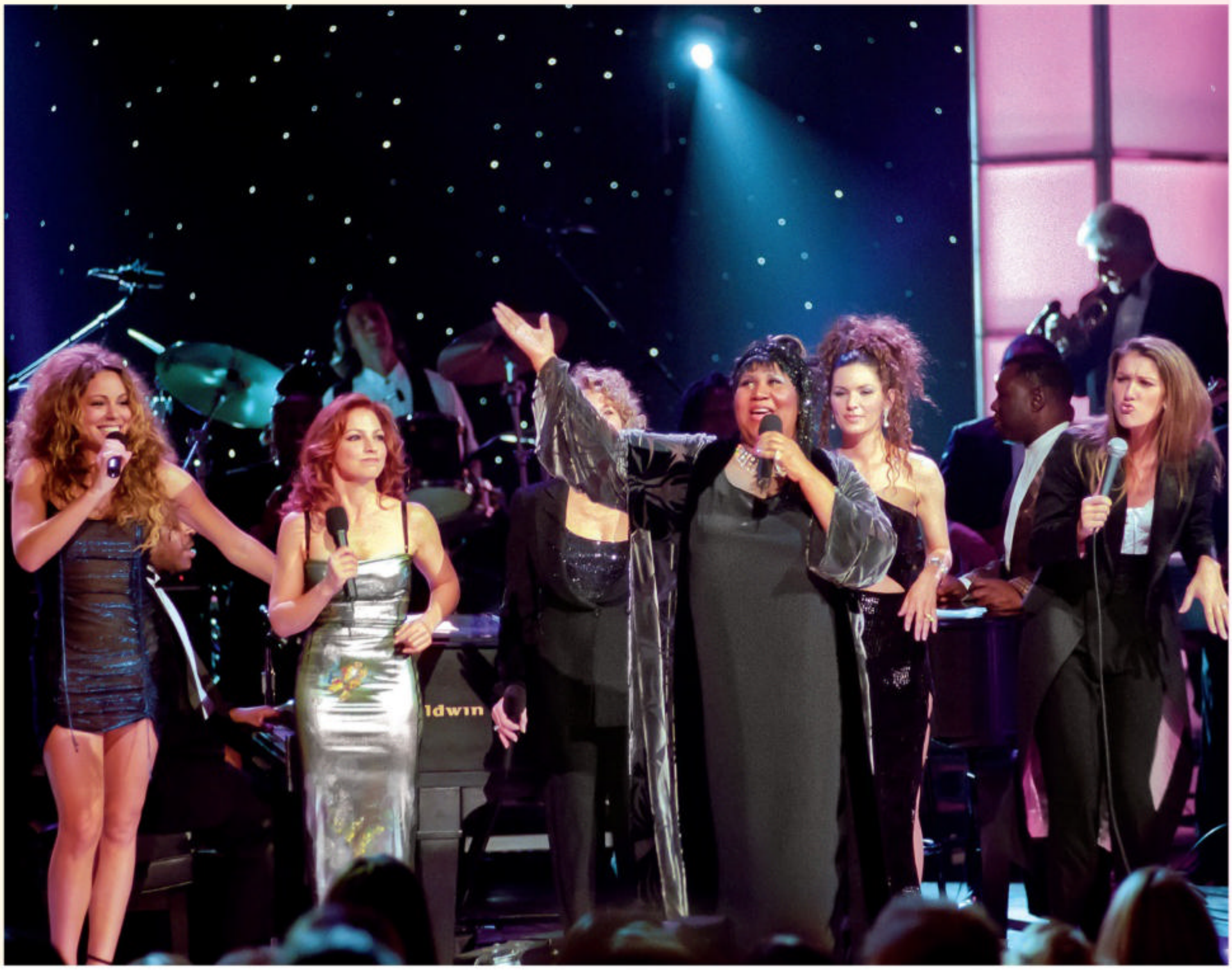
WITH FEELING
The former Kai Tak airport in Hong Kong provided the setting for Dion's first concert tour stop in Asia on Jan. 25, 1999 (left). She also played shows in Japan.

A CUT ABOVE
A short-haired Dion (below) onstage with guitarist Andre Coutu at the Hammersmith Apollo (now the Eventim Apollo) during a tour stop in London on May 25, 1995.

> “THE EARLY ’90s SAW A SHIFT IN AUDIENCE TASTES.”

The duet ended up on Dion's second English-language album, *Celine Dion*, which arrived in 1992 and also featured the hit “If You Asked Me To.” That album sold even better than *Unison*, and Dion also continued to crank out hit French-language records to service the audience who made her huge in the first place.

This was all just preamble to the arrival of *The Colour of My Love* in 1993, which went platinum six times over and scored Dion her first Hot 100 chart-topper in “The Power of Love,” a massive ballad with an enormous climax that had already



been a moderate hit for Jennifer Rush, Air Supply and Laura Branigan. She topped herself again with 1996's *Falling Into You,* which sold over 12 million copies in the United States alone, giving Dion her first-ever No. 1 album and yielding a fresh set of hits in "It's All Coming Back to Me Now" (written by Meat Loaf muse Jim Steinman), a cover of the Eric Carmen classic torch song "All By Myself," and the Diane Warren-penned tune "Because You Loved Me," which shot to No. 1 and was Oscar-nominated in the category of Best Original Song for its inclusion in the Robert Redford/Michelle Pfeiffer romantic drama, *Up Close and Personal*. Almost out of nowhere for U.S. audiences, Celine Dion was suddenly everywhere—and it would not be the last time she found herself on top of the music world thanks to a song from a movie.

DIVAS LIVE
Aretha Franklin (above, center, fore) performs with (from left) Mariah Carey, Gloria Estefan, Carole King (obscured), Shania Twain and Dion in New York on April 14, 1998.

WINNER, WINNER
Dion (right) holds up one of her many awards. The singer rode the rise of the adult contemporary radio format in the late 1980s to great commercial success.

CHAPTER 5

A few of Celine Dion's most-loved classics

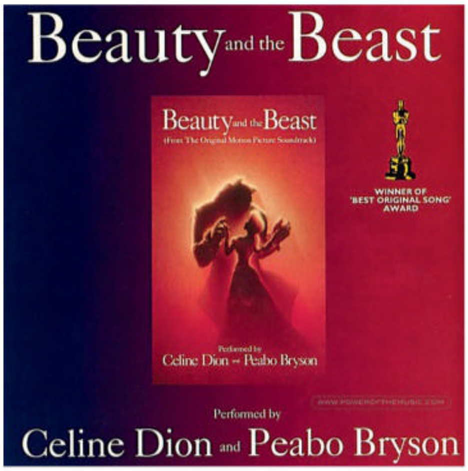
SHOW Stoppers

Celine Dion—who was presented with the Billboard Icon Award at the Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas on May 22, 2016—performs "The Show Must Go On" with her signature gusto.

VISION IN WHITE
Dion dons an all-white suit for her show at the Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy (now the Accor Arena) in September 1996 during her Falling Into You tour.

celine dion

"If You Asked Me To"
Dion's first adult contemporary chart-topper was written by ace songwriter Diane Warren and appeared on Dion's self-titled 1992 album. The song was originally recorded by iconic soul singer Patti LaBelle for the soundtrack to the 1989 James Bond film *License To Kill*. Dion's version climbed to No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100.


Beauty and the Beast
Beauty and the Beast
(From The Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)
WINNER OF "BEST ORIGINAL SONG" AWARD
Performed by
Celine Dion – Peabo Bryson
Performed by
Celine Dion and Peabo Bryson

"Beauty and the Beast"
Three separate songs from Disney's 1992 cultural phenomenon *Beauty and the Beast* were nominated for Best Original Song at the Oscars. As part of their awards campaign, Disney released a pop version of the title track as a way to get voters to focus on one song. Dion was drafted and paired with Peabo Bryson, and "Beauty and the Beast" took home the statuette on Oscar night.

CELINE DION I'M ALIVE

"I'm Alive"

The definitive track from Dion's 2002 comeback album, *A New Day Has Come*, it's a lovely tribute to her newfound joy as a new mother. "I'm Alive" was composed by Swedish songwriters Kristian Lundin and Andreas Carlsson, who worked with Dion on "That's the Way It Is" and also wrote (with Jake Schulze) the NSYNC smash "Bye Bye Bye."

BLINGED OUT
Going for sophistication in an all-black outfit with pops of gold, Dion sings "If You Asked Me To" and "Imagine" on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* on July 14, 1992.

Céline
That's The Way It Is

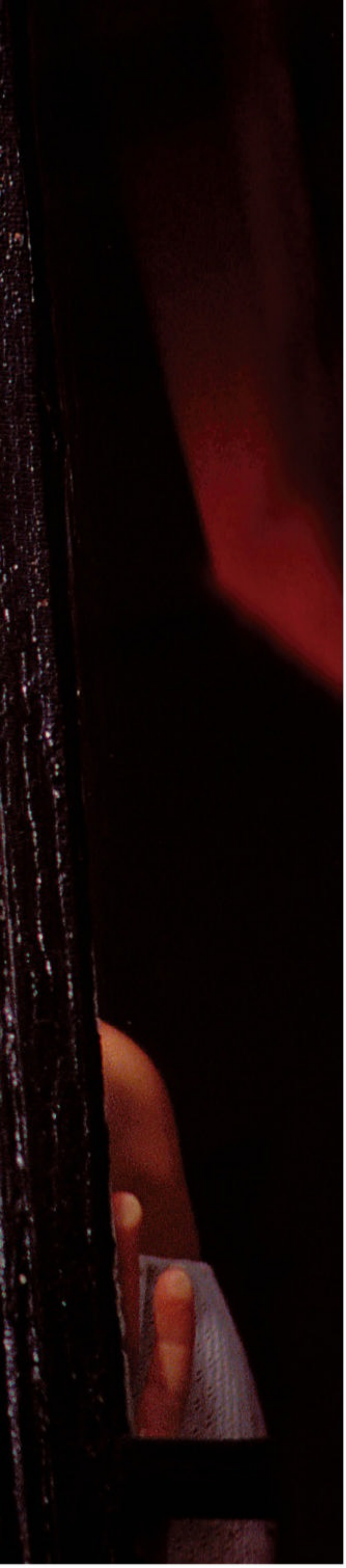
"That's the Way It Is"

Another one written by Lundin and Carlsson, "That's the Way It Is" is the rare non-ballad top 10 for Dion. Originally recorded as a new single for her 1999 hits compilation album, *All the Way...A Decade of Song*, it also served as one of the centerpiece performances on a concert special recorded at Radio City Music Hall and broadcast on CBS in November 1999.

Céline
DION
IT'S ALL COMING BACK TO ME NOW

"It's All Coming Back to Me Now"

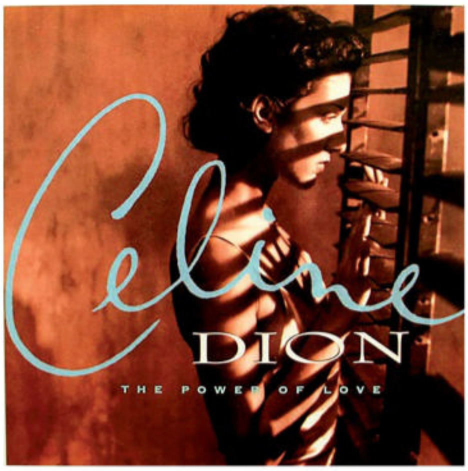
Songwriter Jim Steinman is best known for his work with Meat Loaf (*Bat Out of Hell* and *Bat Out of Hell II*), but he had a woman's voice in mind when he wrote this song, which was inspired by Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Dion's version hit No. 2 on the Hot 100, and serves as the muse for a 2023 film starring Priyanka Chopra Jonas that is built around Dion's music and counts her as one of the stars.



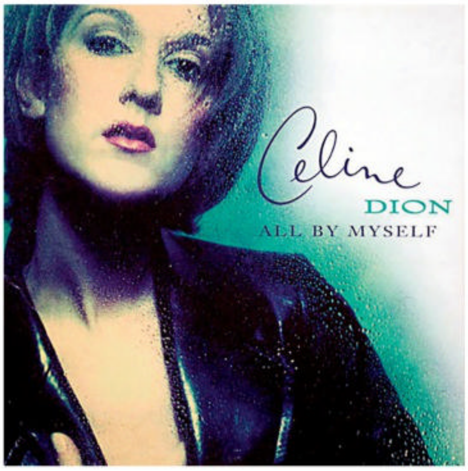
WINDOW TO THE SOUL
Dion peers through a window on the New York set of the music video for "The Power of Love" in 1993. It was the first of her songs to reach No. 1 on the Hot 100.

CELINE DION
WHERE DOES MY HEART BEAT NOW

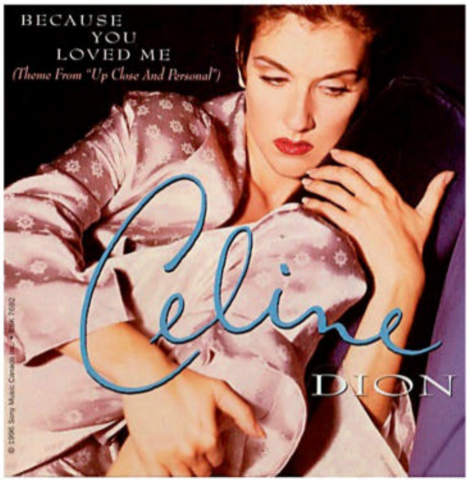
"Where Does My Heart Beat Now"
Dion's first big U.S. hit appeared on her 1990 English-language debut *Unison*. She first performed the song at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1989. It reached No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 and was Dion's signature song when she first made the rounds on American television, performing it on *The Tonight Show* and *Live with Regis & Kathie Lee*.



"The Power of Love"
The track that sent Celine Dion to the top of the Hot 100 for the first of four times had a long history as a winner for other acts. It was originally recorded by Jennifer Rush for her self-titled 1984 album and became the biggest song in the U.K. in 1985. That same year, Australian soft rockers Air Supply scored one of their final Hot 100 hits with their cover. Laura Branigan also found success with her version in 1987.



“All By Myself”
Originally written and recorded by Eric Carmen in 1975, Dion’s version contains one of the highest notes in her entire catalog. “[David Foster] gave the song to me and it was almost a key and a half higher than what he had proposed,” Dion said. “I had no choice but to do it because I really wanted to sing that song. And it worked out. But from day one, it’s been a hard one.”



“Because You Loved Me”
One of the key tracks on 1996’s *Falling Into You*, “Because You Loved Me” first appeared in the 1996 film *Up Close and Personal*. The romantic drama was a moderate hit, but the song was the star: It reached No. 1 on the Hot 100 and earned composer Diane Warren an Oscar nod (she lost to Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice’s song for the Madonna vehicle *Evita*).

THE RIGHT KEY
Dion sits at a piano while filming the music video for “All By Myself,” directed by Gérard Pullicino. The song contains one of the highest notes in her entire catalog.

“

FROM DAY ONE, [‘ALL BY MYSELF’ HAS] BEEN A HARD ONE.

”

CHAPTER 6

The perfect song for an epic movie gave a skeptical Celine Dion her signature recording

My HEART Will Go On

Celine Dion—wearing the blue diamond necklace (the Heart of the Ocean) from the film *Titanic*—arrives at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles for the 70th Academy Awards.

ALL SMILES
Dion had to be convinced to record "My Heart Will Go On" for *Titanic*. The song went on to earn James Horner and Will Jennings (left, top) an Oscar, and Dion a Grammy (left, bottom).

BIG FINISH
Dressed fittingly in navy blue, Dion sings a stirring rendition of "My Heart Will Go On" at the 70th Academy Awards, at which *Titanic* won 11 of the 14 categories for which it was nominated.

BY THE TIME *TITANIC* ARRIVED IN

theaters during the 1997 holiday season, Celine Dion was already a massive superstar with two huge hits tied to movies. But nothing could prepare the entertainment world for the sheer magnitude of the success of James Cameron's romantic historical disaster movie, and Dion was a key ingredient in helping *Titanic* rule the world.

The song spent two weeks atop the Hot 100 and afforded Dion another show-stopping performance at the Oscars—but the journey began with an animated movie called *An American Tail: Fievel Goes West*. Just as the first *An American Tail* film had in 1986, its 1991 sequel featured a soundtrack composed by James Horner, who had already scored a handful of Oscar nods for his work on *Aliens* and *Field of Dreams*, among others. He penned an original song for *Fievel* called "Dreams to Dream," and he reached out to Dion to record the vocal. Teaming with Horner was a smart move, as his song "Somewhere Out There" from the first film was a big pop hit for Linda Ronstadt. Horner loved Dion's performance, but at the time she was not yet an established star, so Ronstadt returned to record "Dreams to Dream."

THE
AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS
AMA
AMERICAN MUSIC AWARD

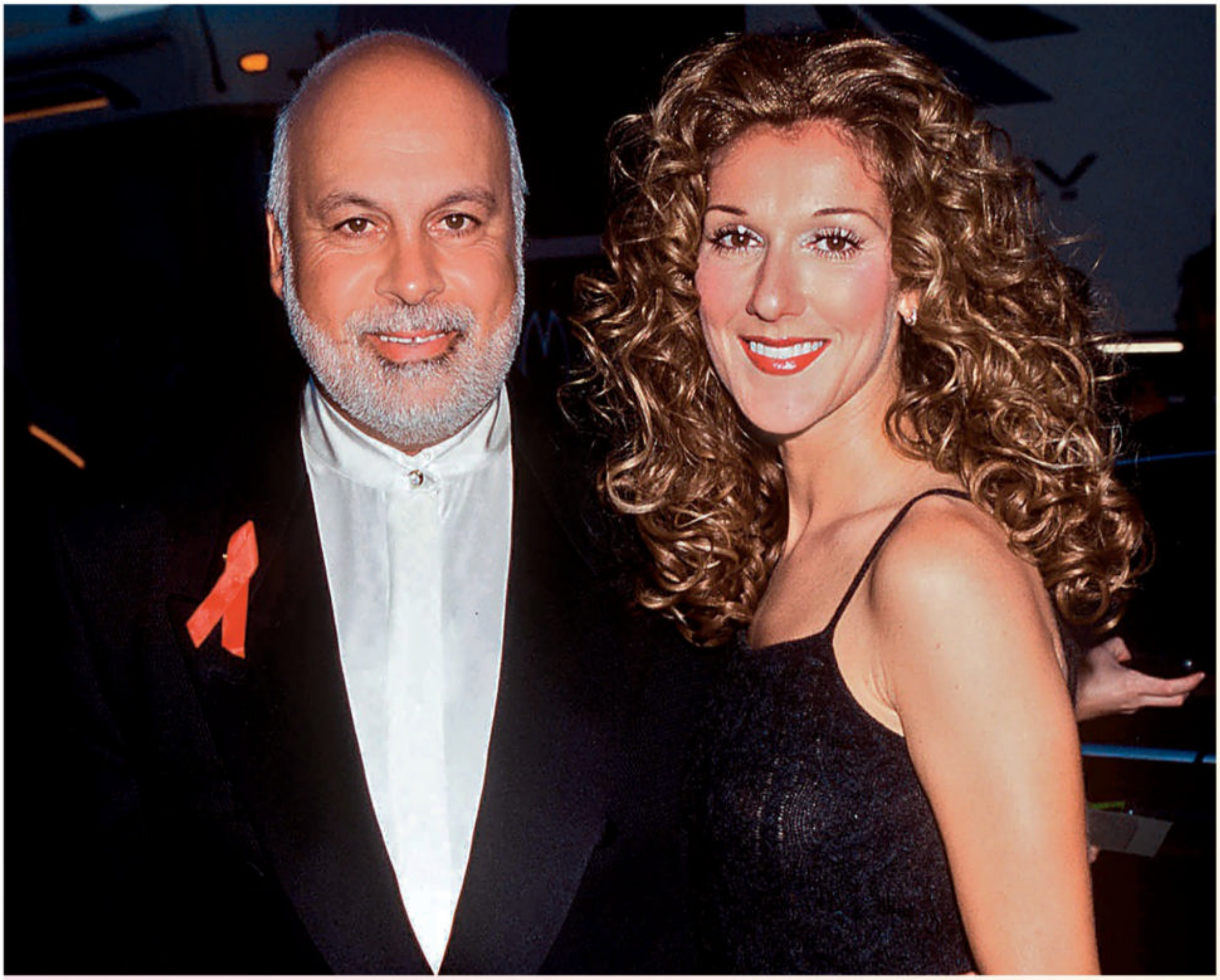
JUGGLING ACT
Dion (left) took home trophies for Pop/Rock Female artist and Adult Contemporary Artist during the 26th Annual American Music Awards in 1999.

RED-CARPET READY
René Angélil (below, left) and Dion—wearing matching black attire—smile for the cameras as they arrive at the 26th Annual American Music Awards in Los Angeles.

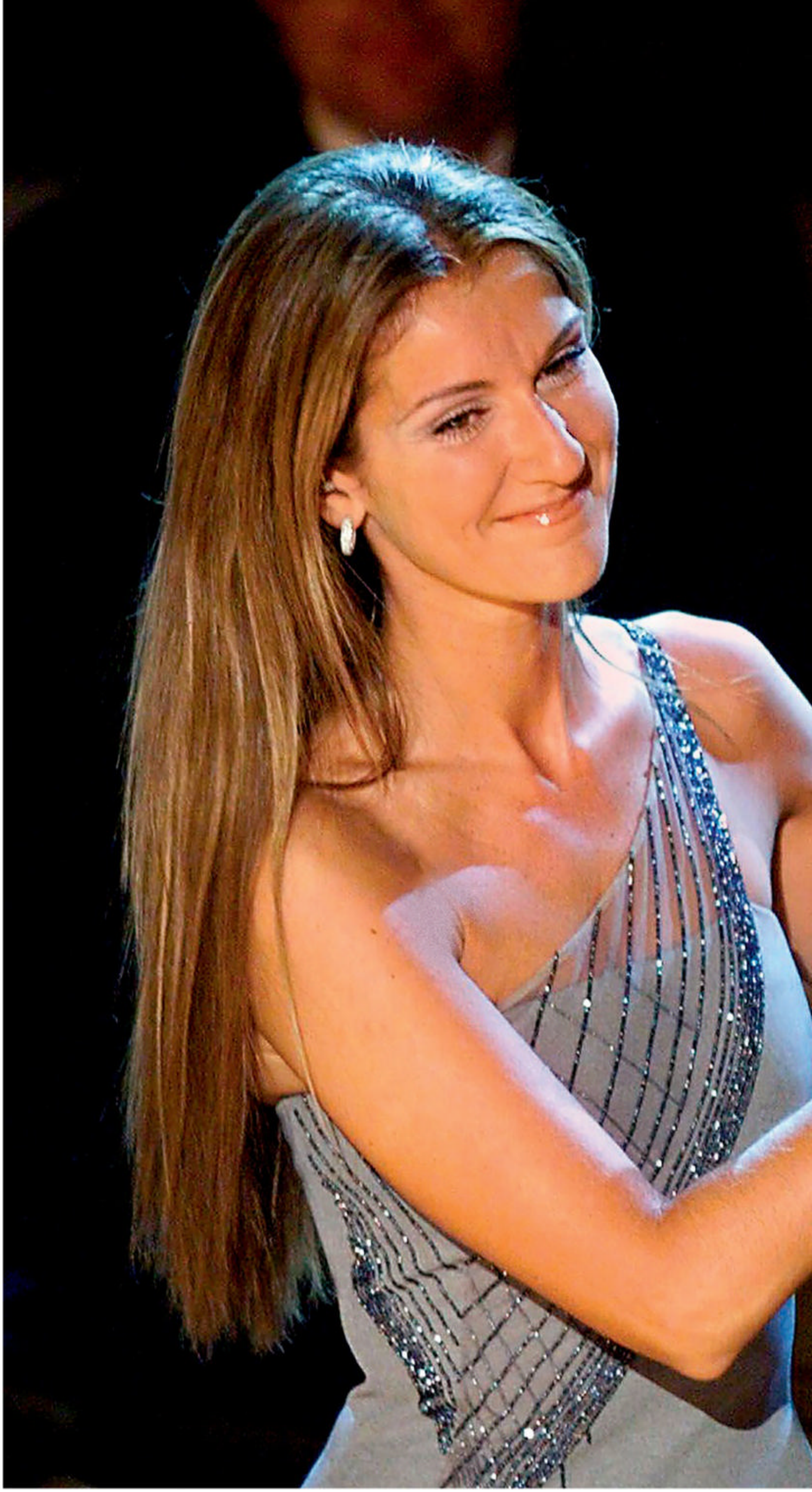
Dion didn't get the gig, but Horner always remembered her voice, and while in the process of crafting the score for *Titanic,* he also penned a pop song that he hoped she would consider recording.

Dion was reticent at first: She had already done two big movie songs ("Beauty and the Beast" and "Because You Loved Me"), and she also didn't like the tune Horner presented. "With all the respect that I have for James...he is not the greatest singer. I was making this sign like, 'This is not possible,'" she said of the first time Horner played her the song. "I didn't want to do it." But manager and husband René Angélil talked her into recording a demo as a trial run. She flew to a studio in New York, recorded the vocal in a single take, and blew Horner away.

Cameron didn't like the idea of his historical epic ending with a pop tune, but he couldn't deny the emotion of Dion's performance. That demo vocal is the one that ended up in the film as the credits roll, and it became the key takeaway that kept countless tears flowing as audiences streamed out of *Titanic,* with many returning again—and again.



CHAPTER 6



DYNAMIC DUET
Grammy winner Dion and Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli perform their song, “The Prayer,” during the 41st Grammy Awards in Los Angeles on Feb, 24, 1999.

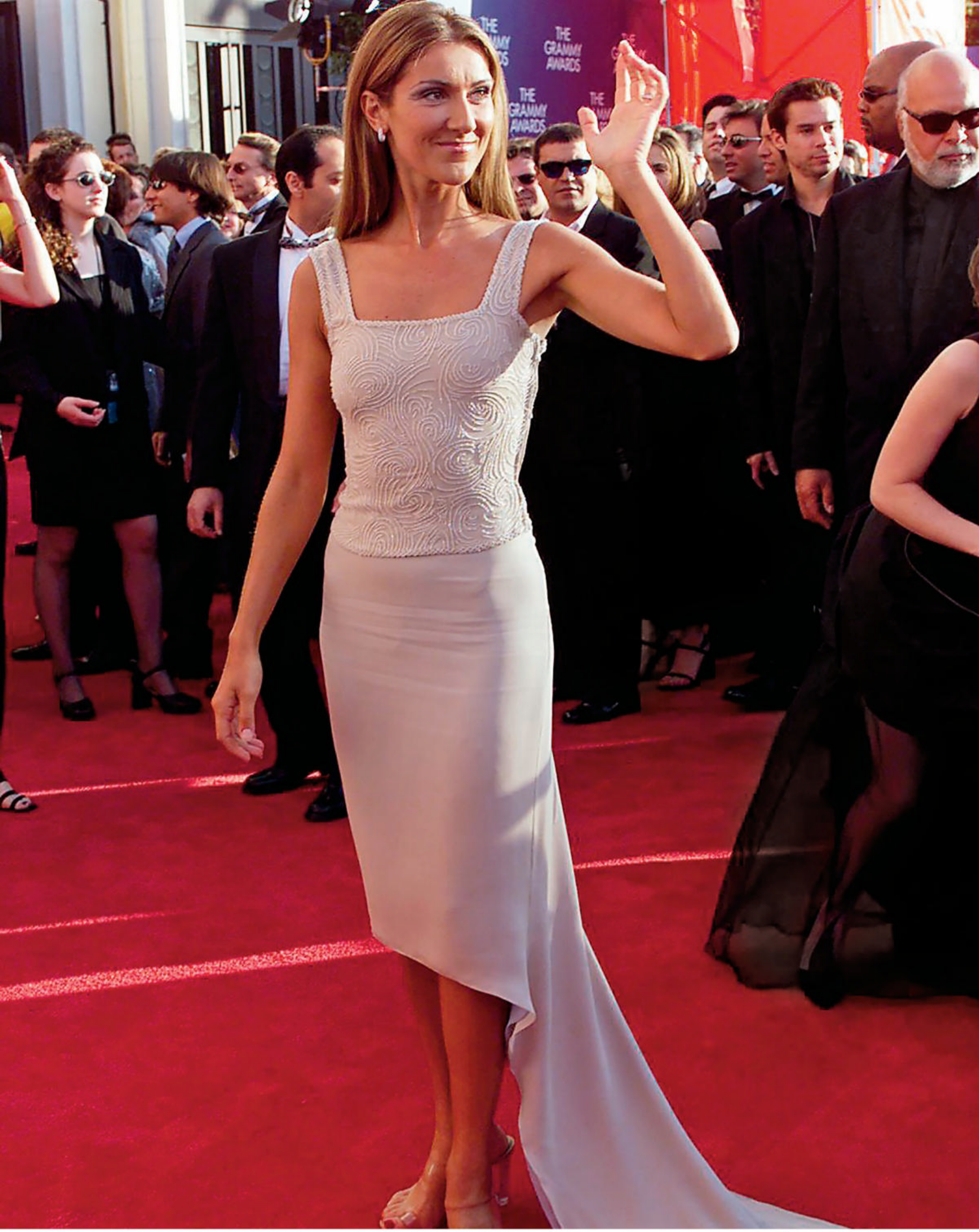
> "EVERY NIGHT... I THINK, 'GEE, WHAT A SONG.'"

TITANIC WIN
James Horner (below, left) and Will Jennings (below, right) pose with Dion after winning Best Original Song for "My Heart Will Go On" at the 70th Academy Awards.

MAKING WAVES
Dion (right) arrives at the 41st Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles on Feb. 24, 1999. That night, she won the Best Female Pop Vocal trophy for "My Heart Will Go On."

"The movie had a punch. What it did not have was something you could take home with you," said Jon Landau, who produced *Titanic* with Cameron. "They found an organic way to weave 'My Heart Will Go On' in. It's just a continuation of the epilogue of the film."

Dion recorded a second version that was more fully produced and was sent to pop radio, where it both inspired and rode the wave of *Titanic* mania. Everything the film touched turned to gold: It was No. 1 in the country for months, sent its soundtrack to platinum status 11 times over in the U.S., and held a longstanding record for most number of Oscar nods (it converted 11 of 14 into category wins, including two prizes for Horner for Best Original Score and Best Original Song). It remains a definitive track in Dion's oeuvre. But even after all the sales and airplay and hardware, she remains a little skeptical. "Every night I'm like, 'Oh, gosh, I'm not going to sing that song again,'" she's said. But even Dion cannot deny the power. "That curtain opens and the smoke starts and people are crying. Every night when I start to sing that song, I think, 'Gee, what a song. What a moment.'"


THE GRAMMY AWARDS

CAESARS PALACE

CHAPTER 7

At the peak of her success, Celine shifted her priorities

Family FIRST

Celine Dion and manager-turned-husband René Angélil arrive at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas in February 2011 with their three sons (from left) Nelson, Eddy and René-Charles in tow.

MUCH TO CELEBRATE
The couple (left, top) renew their vows in January 2000, after Angélil was declared cancer-free. Left, bottom: Celebrating opening night of Dion's Las Vegas show *A New Day...* in 2003.

TAKING A BREAK
Dion performs onstage in Montreal in April 1999. At the end of that year, she would take a yearslong hiatus to help care for her ailing husband, Angélil, and to start a family with him.

CELINE DION WAS ALREADY AN ASCENDING GLOBAL SUPERSTAR

by the time *Titanic* happened, and the worldwide wave of "My Heart Will Go On" only served to keep the ride rolling—all before she turned 30 years old. After beginning her professional singing career when she was just a teenager, she spent the entire decade of the '90s recording and promoting albums and spending time continent-hopping on sold-out tours. When the decade came to a close, she was ready to take a well-earned break. She and her husband, René Angélil, scheduled an event concert for New Year's Eve 2000 in Montreal to ring in the new millennium. Then they planned to shelter from the public eye for a while—Celine's first career pause since she was, literally, a child.

Part of the reason for the extended hiatus was due to Angélil's failing health. While on tour for 1997's *Let's Talk About Love* (the album that contained "My Heart Will Go On" also featured duets with Barbra Streisand and Luciano Pavarotti, collected an armload of Grammys and became one of the biggest-selling albums of all time), Dion noticed a lump on the side of her husband's neck that looked troubling.

BABY BAPTISM
Dion and Angélil participate in the christening ceremony for their first-born son, 6-month-old René-Charles, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada on July 25, 2001.

“

WE WERE TOGETHER AND CLOSER THAN EVER.

”

It had been there for a while but he was so busy with the tour that he had not allowed himself time to see a doctor. Dion insisted he check in with a medical professional while on the road, and on Dion’s 31st birthday, a biopsy revealed that Angélil had cancer. Doctors operated on him immediately to remove the tumor, and he then went through extensive radiation and chemotherapy treatments. Dion still had tour dates left, but she decided to cancel many of them so she could be at her husband’s side—despite his protests. “It’s especially important that you don’t stop,” he told her. “It won’t change anything, as you well know.”

But Dion did stop so that she could be with her husband as much as possible. “Until René was completely out of danger, I wanted to concentrate on him,” she said. “I couldn’t continue to tour and work knowing he was alone with his illness and fear.” Once Angélil recovered from surgery, the couple decamped to Jupiter Island, Florida, where she could help him through the difficult side effects of his fight against cancer. It wasn’t easy, but eventually the disease went into remission and Angélil was declared healthy. “We were together and closer than ever,” Dion said. “His illness became our illness, our cancer, our battle.”

That dovetailed with her planned sabbatical, which found her throwing a massive party at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas to renew her wedding vows with Angélil and focus on starting a family with him. Dion eventually became pregnant via in-vitro fertilization, and on Jan. 25, 2001, their first son, René-Charles, was born. Nine years later, their family became complete with the arrival of twins Eddy

PROUD MOMENT Angélil and René-Charles embrace Dion after the final performance of her show *A New Day...* at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace on Dec. 15, 2007, in Las Vegas.

SAY CHEESE!
Dion enjoyed some time off in March 2007 with eldest son René-Charles, then 6, at Disneyland, where they snapped a photo in front of Sleeping Beauty Castle.

MAMA BEAR
In 2015, Dion (right) took her 4-year-old twin sons, Eddy (center) and Nelson, to Disneyland to celebrate their upcoming 5th birthday with Mickey Mouse.

and Nelson. Although she returned to the public eye in 2002 with the release of the album *A New Day Has Come*, Dion spent the bulk of the 2000s finding a much stronger balance between her personal life and her professional pursuits. She continuously recorded and released records, but she primarily performed in her adopted hometown of Las Vegas in a series of extremely successful and critically acclaimed residencies beginning in 2003. It allowed her to maintain a slightly more private existence, despite the fact that she was still one of the most recognizable celebrities on Earth.

Angélil's health wavered again in 2013 when his cancer returned. Once again, Dion largely stepped away from the music world in order to care for him, and though he fought valiantly he eventually died on Jan. 14, 2016, just a few days before his 74th birthday. Dion was devastated. Every year since, she has paid tribute to her husband on the anniversary of his passing. "There's not one day that we don't think about you," Dion wrote to him in 2021. "We're reaching out to you now more than ever, to guide us, protect us, and continue to watch over us. You are in our hearts and in our lives forever."

POW·MIA
YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

Chill
PREFRESH
Chill
PREFRESH

CHAPTER 8

After her husband's death, Celine prioritized music that came from her heart

FINDING Strength

Celine Dion shimmers in a gold sequinned dress as she performs at the 2016 Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas. The singing legend was honored with the Billboard Icon Award that night.

BELLE OF THE BALL
Dion sings "How Does a Moment Last Forever," from Disney's live-action *Beauty and the Beast*, during a 2017 show at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

IN THE EARLY PART OF 2016, CELINE DION LOST THE

most important person in her life—not just the only man she had ever loved but also the steady hand that had guided her career for three decades. Though the road was often tough and demanding, Angélil was always proud of the fact that he watched out both for Dion's professional and personal well-being. "The challenge for a manager who has been able to take his artist to the top is to keep [her] there," Angélil once said. "But an even greater challenge is to keep [her] happy."

Dion appreciated everything about her husband, and celebrated his life and memory constantly. She also kept her career on track, as he would have wanted. She released another Francophone album *Encore Un Soir* in the summer of 2016, and it featured some of the most uplifting lyrics of her career. Later that year, she released her first English-language single since Angélil's passing, a song called "Recovering," written for her by pop star Pink specifically honoring Dion's late husband. The pair had crossed paths before, and Pink—a big fan of the "My Heart Will Go On" singer—offered to craft a tune for her to assist with her mourning. "[Celine] is like a magic light bulb, walking around emanating light into the world," Pink said. "When I wrote this song, there was such a simple need to it. I know everyone wants to hear Celine wail, I wanted to hear Celine's soul." Dion performed "Recovering" as part of the Stand Up to Cancer telethon special in September 2016.

In fact, it seemed as though Dion, more than a quarter-century into her English-language career,

RECOVERING
With son René-Charles by her side, Dion (below, top) celebrates her Billboard Icon Award in 2016. The singer (below, bottom) takes part in that year's Stand Up To Cancer telethon.

BEAUTY IN BLUE
Dion (right), who recorded the song "How Does a Moment Last Forever" for Disney's live-action *Beauty and the Beast*, arrives at the film's premiere on March 2, 2017, in Hollywood, California.

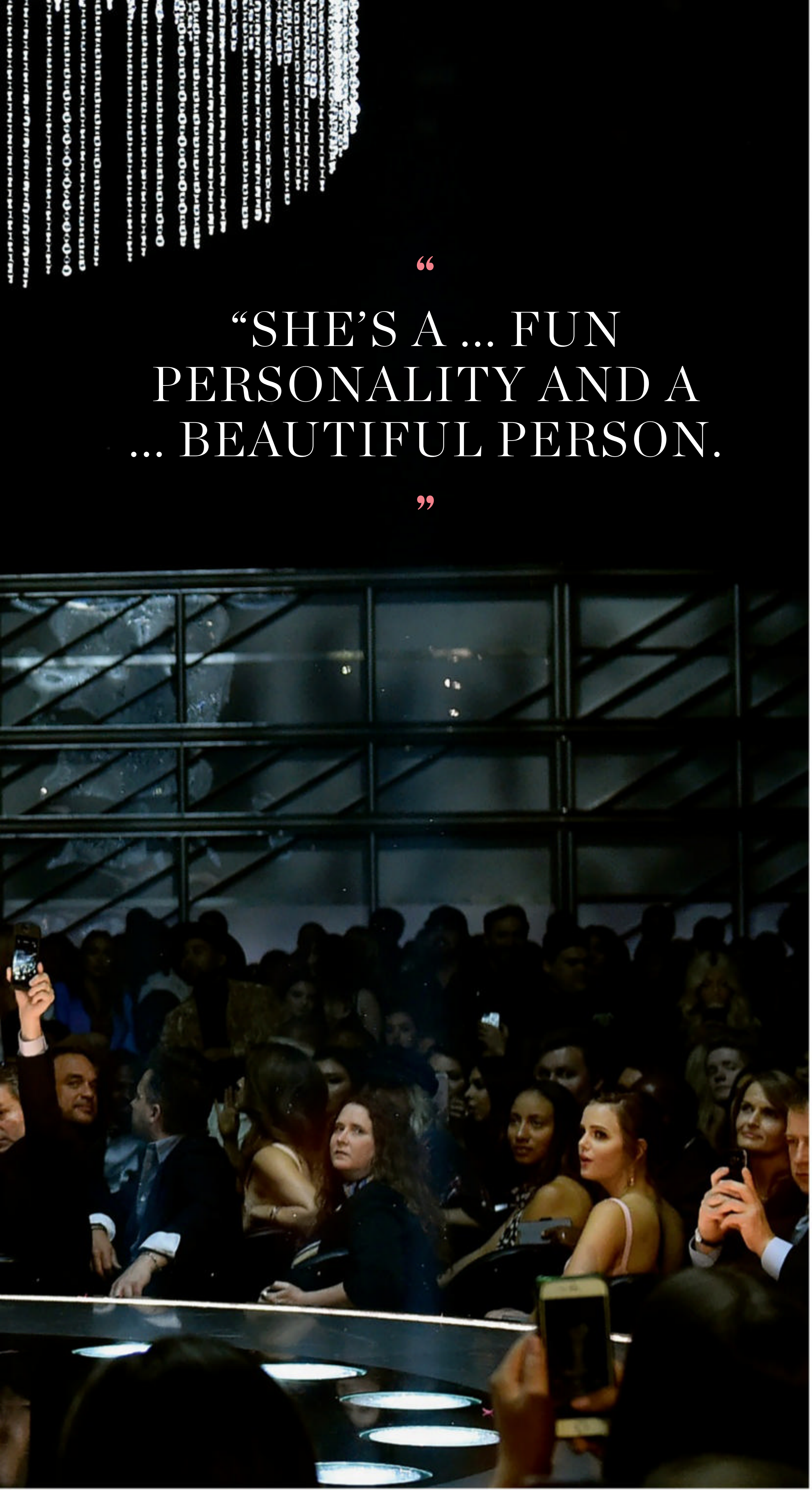
MY LOVED ONES
#Reasons2StandUp

> "EVERYONE WANTS TO HEAR CELINE WAIL, I WANTED TO HEAR CELINE'S SOUL."

was in demand more than ever, particularly in the movie soundtrack world she once ruled. She was brought back into the Disney fold when she recorded "How Does a Moment Last Forever" for the live-action remake of *Beauty and the Beast* that arrived in theaters in March 2017. It was one of three songs Alan Menken and Tim Rice wrote for the new version and played over the closing credits to the film.

Dion also found herself welcomed into the world of comic book movies when she was drafted to sing a song called "Ashes" that served as the centerpiece to the soundtrack of the 2018 Ryan Reynolds vehicle *Deadpool 2*. "Ashes" acts as both an emotional core of the movie (it plays over the opening credits and re-establishes the title character's core tragedy) but also had to match the meta nature of the movie and be a tongue-in-cheek comment on the very idea of having Celine Dion sing a song for a soundtrack. (The official music video featured a dancer dressed as Deadpool doing ballet moves around Dion as she belts out the ballad.) "She has a son who's a fan [of *Deadpool*]. But I think she was actually taken aback by the song as well," explained *Deadpool 2* director

> “SHE’S A … FUN PERSONALITY AND A … BEAUTIFUL PERSON.



HEART-WRENCHER
Marking the 20th anniversary of “My Heart Will Go On,” from the *Titanic* soundtrack, Dion performed the song at the 2017 Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas.

EYES WIDE SHUT
Dion commands the stage at Tele2 Arena in Stockholm, Sweden, on June 17, 2017. After Angélil passed away in early 2016, Dion kept her career on track, as he would have wanted.

STAYING STRONG
"I think I went through a lot. And life had given me the tools to find my inner strength, to find courage, and to keep going," Dion (right) said of the challenges she's faced over the years.

David Leitch, who also helmed the music video. "She's a really sort of fun personality and a really beautiful person, and I think she understood what we were trying to do. And yeah, it was fun, and there might be some slight satire to it, but the song is a really emotional song, and we needed it to land in a genuine way for the movie, first and foremost. So she got it."

"Ashes" also gave Dion success in an entirely new category when the remix by electronic producer Steve Aoki reached No. 1 on Billboard's Dance Club Songs chart.

Finally, in November 2019, Dion released *Courage*, her first English-language album in six years. It was one of the best-reviewed collections of her career and debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, where she hadn't been in 17 years. The album, which was accompanied by a world tour, was a culmination of years of struggle and recovery. "I think I went through a lot. And life had given me the tools to find my inner strength, to find courage, and to keep going," she said. "The people that I love so much embraced the moments that were difficult. They gave me so much strength. And then a song came that was called 'Courage,' and it didn't take long for all of us to say, 'I think the album should be called *Courage*.'"

Celine was back on top—and enjoying fan-fueled success as if she had never left at all.

CHAPTER 9

On stage, she has always been a show stopper

Celine LIVE

Celine Dion, in red, performs with colorfully costumed dancers during the premiere of her Las Vegas show *A New Day...* at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in March 2003.

CHAPTER 9

FOR ALL THE SMASH SINGLES AND ICONIC

performances, all the videos and awards, all the triumph and tragedy, it's possible Celine Dion's biggest legacy lies in the middle of the Nevada desert. Her first residency, *A New Day...*, which opened at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in 2003, was originally a matter of practicality: She had recently released her comeback album, *A New Day Has Come,* after taking a nearly two-year sabbatical, but she had a new baby at home and didn't want to disrupt her life as a parent. Ever since Elvis Presley's late-career stint at the Las Vegas Hilton, most in the entertainment business perceived Sin City as a place to go once an artist was past the peak of his or her career.

Dion was different. Here was a singer still in her prime who was heading to Las Vegas to promote a chart-topping multi-platinum album. And her show wouldn't be a lounge act—she wanted to turn it into a multimedia theatrical spectacle. *A New Day...* was designed and directed by Franco Dragone, who had made his reputation as the director of Cirque Du Soleil, which had grown from a Canadian

ALL EYES ON HER
Dion performs during her U.S. television special *That's Just the Woman in Me,* which aired on CBS in 2008 and celebrated the release of her album *Taking Chances.*

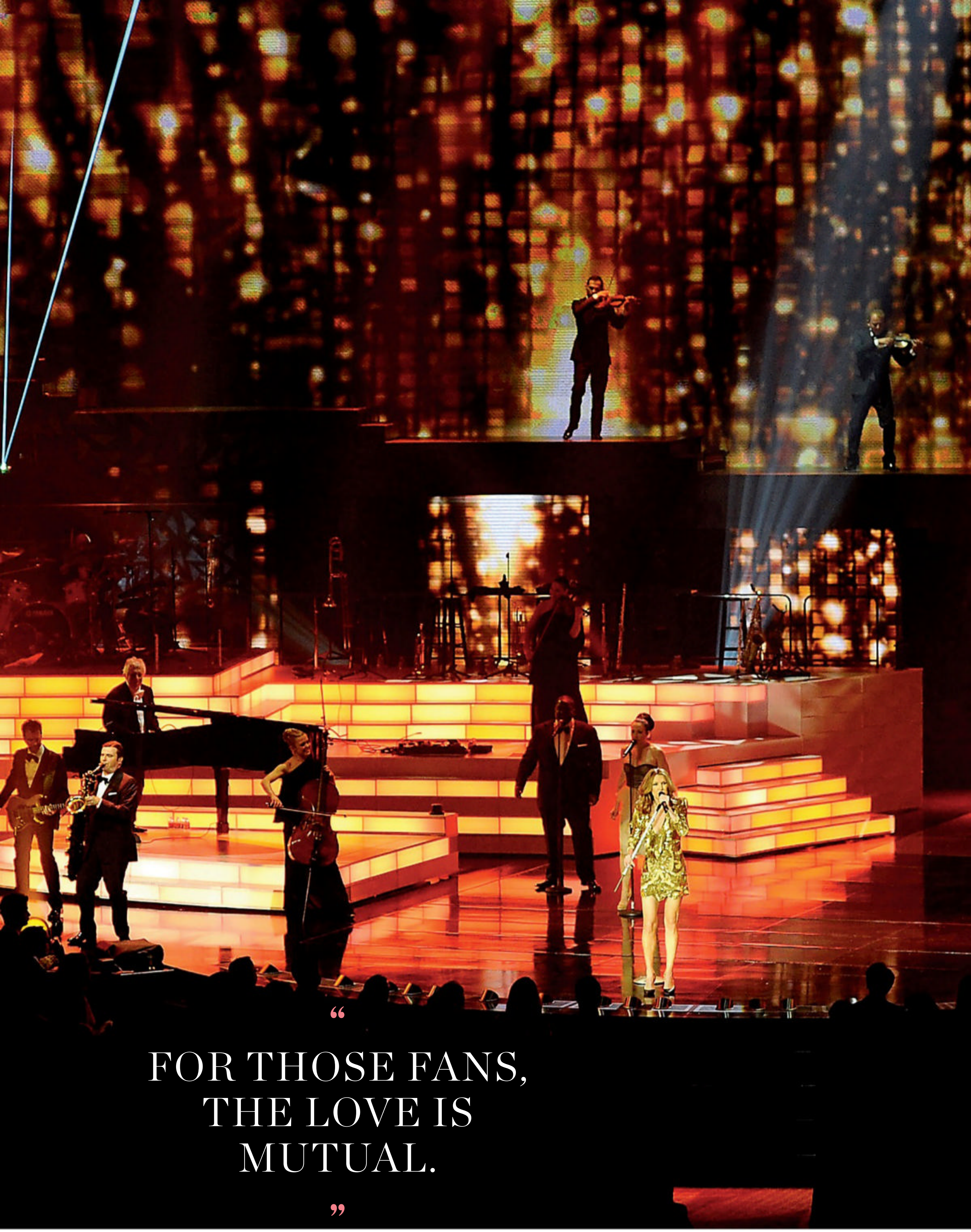
COMING BACK TO HER
Dion (left) kicks off her Taking Chances world tour in Berlin, Germany, in June 2008, marking her return to the global stage after five years of performing her show *A New Day...* in Vegas.

A NEW DAY
The singer (below, left) rocks out at the 2004 World Music Awards in Las Vegas, and greets fans (below, right) during an appearance on NBC's *Today* show in New York in July 2016.

performance art troupe into an international phenomenon. A lot of Dragone's approach carried over into Dion's show, which featured a small army of dancers, inventive use of onstage effects and stirring projections and images on giant video screens. At the center of it all was Dion, coolly belting out a combination of her most beloved songs and a carefully curated selection of covers both classic and obscure.

The long run of *A New Day...* allowed Dion to play around with the set list, and the show itself evolved quite a bit over the course of its stay at The Colosseum. The success was unprecedented: Dion's original three-year run was extended to five years thanks to ticket demand, and by the time she closed *A New Day...* in December 2007 she had played to an estimated 3 million people across 717 shows and took in a staggering $385 million at the box office, making it the most successful residency the concert industry had ever seen.

Dion returned to Caesars Palace for her second Las Vegas residency when *Celine* opened in 2011. The show ran for a total of eight years (with a break in the middle so Dion could take care of the ailing Angélil) and 427 performances. Unlike its predecessor, *Celine* was produced and directed by Ken Ehrlich, the longtime showrunner of the Grammy Awards telecast and a frequent television collaborator of Dion's. This show was a far more stripped-down affair, eschewing the wild theatrical elements of her previous engagement. But it was no less successful, bringing in just



> “FOR THOSE FANS, THE LOVE IS MUTUAL.”

CENTER STAGE
After closing her five-year Las Vegas residency at the end of 2007, Dion returned to Sin City in 2011 for a brand-new show at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace.

shy of $300 million in ticket sales. Perhaps more important than her personal success was the effect her dominance of Las Vegas had on the city's entertainment landscape. After Dion proved you could cash huge checks and still maintain your relevance and integrity while operating out of a casino, the floodgates opened for just about everybody else in the music world, from Elton John to Britney Spears to Mötley Crüe and beyond. Vegas always fancied itself the entertainment capital of the world, but it wasn't until Dion set up shop there that it could seriously consider itself so relevant in the modern world.

Since *Celine* closed, fans have eagerly awaited what will come next. But Dion has had to delay plans for her next live residency, first because of the COVID-19 pandemic and then to attend to her own health issues, which included bouts of severe muscle spasms in her back. Dion revealed in a tearful Instagram post in December 2022 that the spasms were caused by stiff-person syndrome, a rare neurological disorder.

Despite the devastating diagnosis, Dion says she's working to return to the stage, where she is eager to see the adoring public that helped make her dreams come true. "All I know is singing," she said. "It's what I've done all my life. And it's what I love to do the most."

GOLDEN TOUCH
Wearing a fringed mini dress, Dion (above) performs at the Bambi Media Awards in Dusseldorf, Germany, in November 2012, accepting the Entertainment trophy later in the evening.

LADY IN RED
The "Power of Love" singer (right) sparkles as she takes the stage at the American Airlines Arena in Miami on Jan. 17, 2020, during her Courage world tour.

The LEGENDARY CELINE DION

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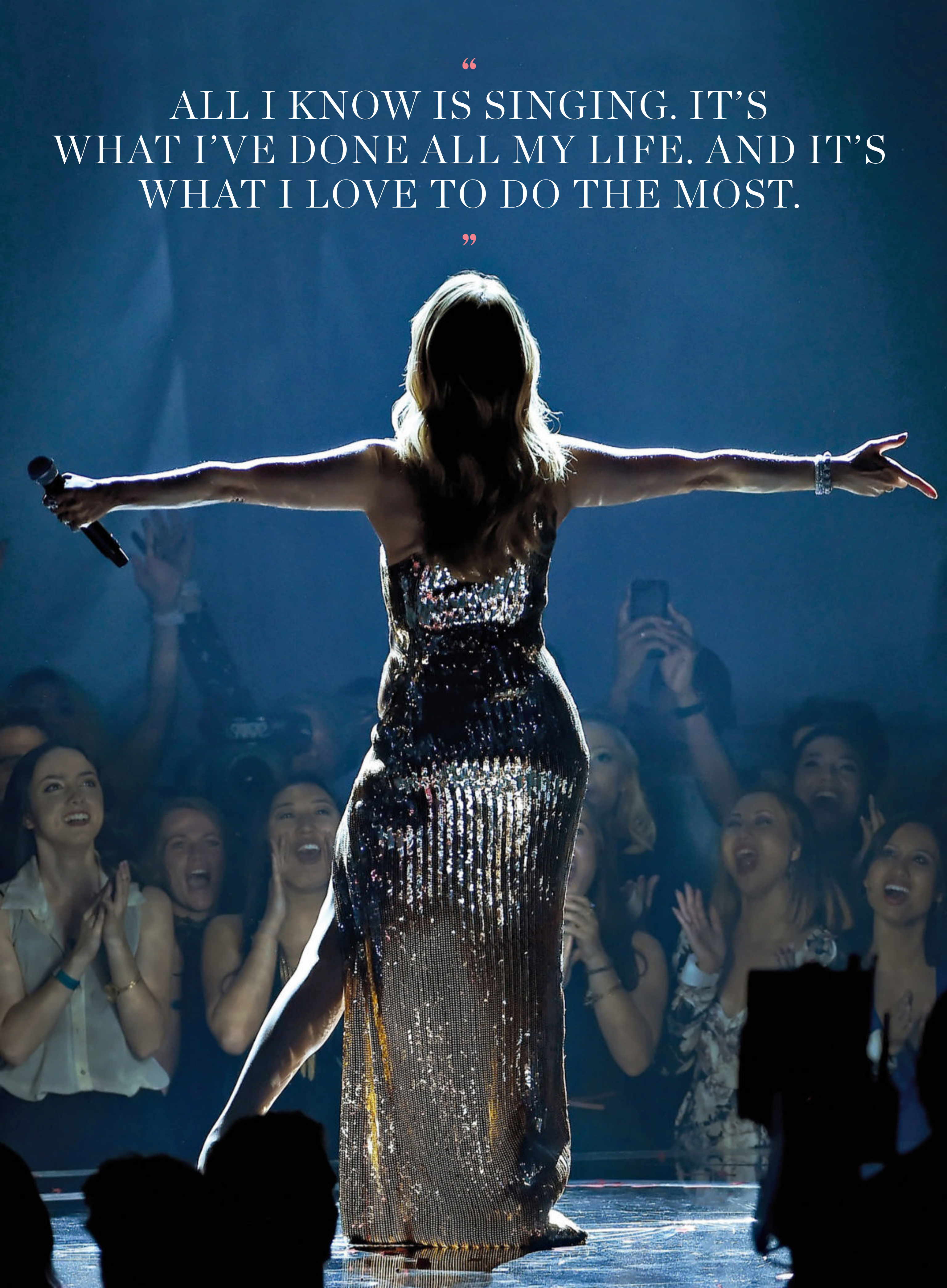

> “ALL I KNOW IS SINGING. IT’S WHAT I’VE DONE ALL MY LIFE. AND IT’S WHAT I LOVE TO DO THE MOST.”